














VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES








Tips and Best Practices for Reopening Communal Activities in Assisted Living Facilities

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recommends that long-term care facilities do not reopen until all residents and staff members receive a single baseline COVID-19 test. VDSS has compiled tips and best practices to assist in preventative strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Each individual facility should make its decision based on an assessment of its own specific circumstances. This does not diminish the responsibility of assisted living facilities to safely provide care and services to residents and follow existing COVID-19 health and safety guidance.

General Guidance

-  Allow communal activities only for COVID-19 negative and asymptomatic residents or residents meeting the criteria for [discontinuation of transmission-based precautions](#).
-  Offer alternative activities such as teleparticipation and other in-room programming to residents who are COVID-19 positive or symptomatic.
-  Schedule the same group of residents to attend activities together each day (cohorting) and the same staff members to conduct/assist with the activity.
-  Prohibit the use of shared recreational items.
-  Do not use recreational items that cannot be properly cleaned and sanitized.
-  Weather permitting, encourage outdoor activities while maintaining social distancing.
-  Prohibit off-site activities.
-  Stagger activity times with fewer residents per activity while maintaining six feet of separation between residents.
-  Staff members assisting residents with activities should wash their hands and change gloves between residents.
-  Residents should wear a face covering or face mask at all times unless medically contraindicated.
-  Staff should wear a face mask at all times.



Activity Areas

-  Residents should complete proper hand hygiene before entering an activity area and immediately upon return to their room.
-  Consider activity area capacity for proper social distancing.
-  Implement steps to support physical distancing, such as repositioning furniture, mapping spacing on the floor with tape or other marking products, and providing other visual signals for residents.
-  Permit use of common areas such as lobbies for activities provided residents use appropriate physical distancing and continually wear a face mask or cloth face covering.
-  Limit use of additional activity areas such as on-site gyms, libraries, billiard rooms, etc. by appointment only and under direct staff supervision. Properly clean and sanitize these areas after use by each resident.
-  For smaller facilities that use dining areas as activity areas, remove all items used for meal service from the tables prior to residents entering for activity participation. Clean and disinfect furnishings and touch points using an EPA-registered agent immediately upon completion of the activity and prior to placing food service items back on the table.
-  Clearly mark tables not being used for residents as out of service.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Tips and Best Practices for Reopening Communal Activities in Assisted Living Facilities

Activity Areas continued

-  Stagger entrance and exit points to eliminate multiple residents and staff entering and exiting at the same time. If staggering is not possible, ensure all residents have exited prior to allowing more residents to enter.
-  Properly sanitize all surfaces, touch points, and furniture with an EPA-registered agent after each use.

Additional Resources:

- [Activity Connection COVID-18 Care Package](#)
- [NCCAP Covid-19 Activity Director Resources](#)
- [Advancing States: Dealing with Adults in Isolation during COVID-19](#)
- [VDH Cleaning and Disinfection Tips for COVID-19](#)
- [CMS Nursing Home Reopening Recommendations \(5/18/2020\)](#)
- [VDH Nursing Home Guidance for Phased Reopening 6.18.2020.pdf](#)
- [VDH Nursing Home Reopening Guidance](#)

Contact your licensing inspector if additional guidance is needed.